

Amendments to the Claims:

Following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application, as amended:

1. (currently amended) A method of preparing lipid particles having an external lipid coating, comprising:

preparing lipid particles comprised of (i) a lipid composition containing a charged lipid and (ii) a therapeutic agent, said particles each having an outer lipid coating having an external lipid leaflet and an internal lipid structure; and

incubating said particles in a medium and under conditions effective to remove said charged lipid from the external lipid leaflet into said medium.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preparing is comprised of preparing lipid particles composed of a lipid composition containing at least one cationic lipid.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preparing comprises (i) forming lipid vesicles composed of said lipid composition and (ii) complexing said lipid vesicles with said therapeutic agent.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said incubating comprises incubating said lipid particles in a medium containing uncharged lipid vesicles.

5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein said incubating further includes adding to the medium a lipid-polymer-ligand conjugate.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said lipid particles are liposomes.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein said incubating further includes adding to the medium a lipid derivatized with a hydrophilic polymer.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein said adding is comprised of adding a phospholipid derivatized with polyethyleneglycol.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said incubating is at a temperature of less than about 15 °C.

10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said incubating is for a time of greater than about 5 hours.

11. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said preparing is comprised of preparing lipid particles having an entrapped therapeutic agent selected from the group consisting of a charged drug, a protein, a peptide, and a nucleic acid.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein said therapeutic agent is a protein or peptide.

13-18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) A method of preparing lipid particles having an asymmetric charged lipid composition in its outer lipid coating prior to *in vivo* administration, comprising:

preparing lipid particles comprised of (i) a lipid composition containing a charged lipid and (ii) a therapeutic agent, said particles each having an outer lipid coating having an external lipid leaflet and an internal lipid structure; and

incubating said particles in a medium and under conditions effective to remove charged lipids from the external lipid leaflet into said medium.

20. (original) The method according to claim 19, wherein said incubating includes incubating at a temperature of less than about 15 °C.

21. (original) The method according to claim 19, wherein said incubating includes incubating for a time of greater than about 5 hours.

22. (original) The method according to claim 19, wherein said incubating includes incubating in a medium comprised of neutral lipid vesicles.

23. (New) The method according to claim 19, further comprising separating the lipid particles from said medium.

24. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising separating the lipid particles from said medium.